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ON THE POSSIBILITY OF LONG-CONTINUED ABSTINENCE FROM FOOD.

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"I did not say it was possible; I only said it was true."

"The science of medicine is founded on conjecture, and improved by murder."—*Sir Astley Cooper.*

PART I.

THIS subject has been brought prominently before the public during the last year, in consequence of the alleged abstinence from food of Sarah Jacobs, "the Welsh Fasting Girl." So much interest has been excited by the accounts given of her living for two years without food, that at length a committee was formed, on the recommendation of medical men, for the purpose of setting the question at rest, and this committee obtained the services of four skilled nurses from Guy's Hospital, who scrupulously watched her to death in eight days. The doctors and the press have so imbued the public mind with the impossibility of living without food, under any circumstances of bodily state however abnormal, that on the poor girl's death it was at once concluded that it must be on that account alone a case of imposture, contrived and continued by her and her father and family for the purpose of gain. For not forcing her to take food during the eight days, without considering whether it were possible for her to take it or not, the father has been found guilty of manslaughter by the coroner's jury, and has now to take his trial at the next assizes.

There is no denying that the general idea underlying this state of things, is, that it is impossible for the human organism to continue in life for any lengthened period without being nourished by food in the ordinary way, and, therefore, that

any person pretending not to take food is a cheat and an impostor.—Q. E. D.

It is also certain that this almost universal opinion has been created and fostered by the positive statements of the medical profession, and of the press, almost without exception, throughout England. By many of the members of these professions the idea is entertained, I believe without the slightest foundation, that were such a case possible, it could only be by means bordering on the supernatural; and that as there is not any supernatural, the case is impossible on that ground also. The very idea of such a thing has lashed them into fury, and the coroner could not help asking, "Was it easier to believe natural laws to be reversed, or that the father was stating falsehoods?" This was quite a neat way of putting it, and it really embraces the whole aspect of the case, as it has been presented to the public. I have not learnt even the name of this coroner, who has such a particular knowledge of natural laws, as that they can be referred to in that easy way, as being contravened by the father's statement. It was, however, a great and special blessing for people with these opinions that the poor girl died under the eight days' watching, because, had she lived for much longer, their favourite opinions would have been in jeopardy. But they breathed freely again when her death was telegraphed from Wales, and they wreaked the fright which had caused them to send for the nurses, upon the father and family for their alleged criminal negligence in not forcing food upon her, whether she could take it or not. It does not seem to have occurred to them that they were the real slaughterers of the poor girl.

I have been able to gauge this state of public opinion not only from the press, but from a large circle of friends of all classes, nearly all of whom re-echo the belief that no one has ever lived for any long time without food, and that, therefore, the girl, and her father and family, must necessarily have conspired together to deceive the world, in order to get notoriety, and to obtain half-crowns and five-shilling pieces from credulous visitors.

In these days, new branches of industry for extracting money are not unknown to us, and it is quite possible, therefore, that my friends and the public may be right in their opinion of this particular case; and it may be proved on the trial that, until the nurses from Guy's Hospital arrived on the scene, the girl was regularly and secretly fed by her father and family, and probably that on the eve of their arrival she took in a larger supply than usual, to assist her in holding out during the trial that awaited her. But in order to determine the certainty of this fraudulent feeding having taken place regularly during the

last two years, in which the girl was alleged to have abstained from food, the public have dispensed with all proof, and have constructed the convenient syllogism :—

1. No one can live without ordinary food.
2. Sarah Jacobs is alleged to have so lived for two years.
3. Sarah Jacobs is an impostor.

It is because of the existence in the public mind of this syllogism, which has been dogmatically inserted there by the medical profession and the press, that I feel it a duty to say that its foundation and principal limb has been repeatedly questioned through many centuries; and that the medical profession and the press, if they knew this, were bound in common honesty to have so informed the public, in order that it might have formed its opinion after adequate study and inquiry, instead of in utter ignorance of these recorded cases. I do not assert that the cases stated in medical books on this subject are genuine, though they appear to be so, and to be supported by as good evidence as passes current for most disputed facts; but what I object to is the dogmatic assertion of an antecedent impossibility, and of demonstrated fraud, without the least reference to the repeated instances occurring in the doctors' own archives of medical science, and as if such records did not exist. I have known so many impossible things to happen, that I have no respect for antecedent impossibilities, especially in this age, when sciolism has such an ascendancy, and such a thin skin, that it fears being tripped up by everything out of the common way. In this frame of mind, these scientific people cling convulsively like poor sailors on a raft, to each plank that saves them from unwelcome facts, especially if they suppose them to border on the supernatural. I can fancy the happy, well-satisfied and beaming faces with which these people read at breakfast the telegram from Wales, and looked up to say, "I told you so: of course the girl is dead." There are sad instances in the world, when, for some providential ends, the prophecies of the stupid come true, and they are allowed to plume themselves upon their wisdom for a time. If this be one of such, I am not sorry to break in, somewhat rudely, on their satisfaction, and to recall cases from their own records, which certainly deserve to be known, and cannot now be got rid of, as if they did not exist.

It is not a small issue that is at stake, if it were only that Sarah Jacobs' father has to be tried for manslaughter, a conviction for which crime might subject him to penal servitude for life, if only the press and the doctors can make a learned judge and a less learned jury believe in their "antecedent impossibility" theory; but there is this "antecedent impossibility" also which will be on its trial, and "may God give it a good deliverance"

if it be true—otherwise not. If, however, the fraudulent administration of food be proved by substantial evidence, which hitherto, however, is most conspicuous by its absence, I do not at all wish to shield the wicked father from the severest punishment; and I should even think that his case was one of deliberate murder, and might have been treated as such. When the coroner characterized the father's statement as "hideous nonsense," he might, if he had not accepted only the "antecedent impossibility" hypothesis instead of positive evidence, have given it a much more proper name.

But, if the press and the doctors have been deceiving the public, by concealing from them the repeated occurrence of such cases in their own books; and if there be historical evidence as well as modern for the truth of these; and if this species of human hybernation is by no means unknown, but has acquired a place in medical nomenclature as *asitia*, and *adipsia*, or, abstinence from food, and abstinence from drink, I shall consider them as highly culpable in pandering to the sceptical spirit of the day by not bringing such instances forward.

These are, then, the issues to be raised in the forthcoming trial, and I have every confidence that they will be safe in the hands of any one of our learned judges, and of an honest jury. It is asserted, moreover, by the *Pall Mall Gazette*, and probably without any foundation, that the Home Office is to take up the prosecution, and, if that be true, it will be an additional safeguard for the truth; for it is scarcely possible that the "antecedent impossibility" can have been determined in the affirmative as a question to be maintained at all hazards at Government expense. It is more probable that Mr. Bruce, under the able advice of Mr. Godfrey Lushington, has determined that both the father and the idea shall have a fair trial. And yet, if the news be true, it strikes one as odd that the Home Office should shew such praiseworthy alacrity in this case, when it has recently refused all pressure to take up a much more nationally important case. A public prosecutor has been much more wanted in many cases than now in vamping up the sceptical spirit of the time.

I am supported in my views of this case by a few congenial friends; but with their exception, I can see that by this publication I am only exposing myself to a storm of abuse from the too influential leaders of the public. This I am quite ready to encounter, and to find out what harm it can do me to stand up for what I believe to be a duty to the father of the girl, in preparing the way for a fair trial.

The Reverend E. Jones, the clergyman in whose parish the family reside, after watching the case for about twelve months,

wrote the particulars of it to the newspapers, and he must have been astounded to find what a shower of scurrility and abuse his simplicity had brought upon him. He could not have taken more certain means of being abused with insane fury, than by drawing attention to such a case.

It appears to me that in the absence of direct evidence of food having been administered during the two years, the "antecedent impossibility" theory must fail, in the face of the repeated instances recorded in medical books of long-continued abstinence in certain abnormal states of the body. There would then remain only for the father to meet the charge of not having given food during the eight days in which the death-watches from Guy's were placed there, and for this it would have seemed more just if the nurses themselves and the doctors, and others who placed them there, had had to meet the charge of manslaughter. They seem to have much cool composure, when they watch the child to death, and then charge the father with the manslaughter.

The doctors are in this dilemma, that, if they knew, as they now say, that all such cases of abstinence are impossibilities, they were deliberately putting an intense pressure on the girl by causing her to abstain from necessary food, under the penalty of being convicted of imposture, and they became thus the direct cause of her death from starvation. Whereas, the father, if he were ignorant enough to have believed in the previous fasting, or had been deceived by his daughter as to her power of existing without food, was in no way to blame in courting the experiment, at the instance of the doctors. The doctors therefore, and the scientific people, are chargeable on their own showing with wanton cruelty in subjecting her to the experiment, and of absurdity in putting their "antecedent impossibility" to proof, because real impossibilities do not require disproving, at the cost of human life or otherwise. I should like to hear how the authorities at Guy's can have allowed their nurses to go to Wales on such an errand; and why all who were concerned in placing them in the girl's room for such a purpose, are not now on their trial, instead of or along with the father.

Throughout the discussions which have been raised during the case, hardly a case has been brought forward, excepting that of "Ann Moore, the fasting woman of Tutbury," and who was watched by a committee of gentlemen, who, finding that she was sinking "were apprehensive of being inculpated on the charge of murder," and gave up their watch and ordered in food, upon which Ann Moore admitted her imposture. No reference is made to other cases in which no imposture has been either admitted or discovered, and if the doctors allege

that in those other cases the result would have been the same under similar watching, they are surely bound to prove the assertion, or to prove the "antecedent impossibility;" no attempt to do either of which they have yet made.

It is necessary now to give the father's statement on oath before the coroner, and the summing up of that officer.

The father, Evan Jacobs, was not called, but volunteered evidence. He was sworn, and said in Welsh that he was the father of the deceased. He had a wife and seven children and a servant man at Lletherneudd. The eldest was 18, the deceased was the third daughter. The second child was a girl of 15; and Sarah, 12 years old. Deceased was a very healthy child. Last February two years she was at school. One morning on coming home she complained to her mother, and spat blood; and was ill three days. We thought it was a cold, and sent for Dr. Davies. She was then crying, and complaining of pains inside. The doctor gave some medicine, which eased the pain that night, but on the morrow it returned, and the week after, the pain inside being more acute, Dr. Davies thought she had worms, and treated her accordingly. He attended her for a month, and then confessed his inability to understand her complaint, and said that he could not relieve her, and that none could cure her but the great Doctor, God Almighty. Dr. Davies then withdrew, but told witness he could go to other doctors, but that was of no use only to spend money. They called in Mr. Hopkins, M.D., who said they should have called him nine days sooner (laughter), and there would have been a chance of cure, but there were no hopes now, as she had inflammation of the brain. This was in April, 1867. Hopkins only came once, and gave deceased two pills, but she could not take them. She was too ill. Dr. Davies was again sent for, and said there would be some change on Sunday. On the following Sunday we thought she was going to die. She called in a faint voice for milk. She had not taken food before for months. We used to moisten her lips with weak table beer and put it inside her mouth, but she did not swallow any. She passed no excrement, and but a small quantity of urine. Up to the following August she only took six cupfuls of rice and milk. The bowels were not regularly opened, sometimes not for a week or eight days. When she swallowed food it came back with froth and blood. From August to September she was not willing for us to give her food. She had fits, in which she threw her arms about, and was in bed constantly. From September to October she took a little apple dumpling twice a day, and some milk and sugar towards the end of the month, and a little apple in a spoon, about the size of a pill, morning and evening. She passed water every other day. Neighbours were coming in. She was not very

thin, but looked bad in the face, and suffered pains in the left side. From the beginning to the end of October, 1867, she would not allow food to be taken into her sight. She never took food from that time until her death. We moistened her lips with water several times a day. Three weeks after she ceased to take food she had motions every day for a week, very large stool and excrement very hard. She passed water in middling quantity during the same week. At the end of the week the stool was very large, but she had no stool afterwards to the time of her death. Three weeks after the end of the week when she had the last stool she every morning passed water in the quantity usual to girls of her age. From that time (the end of December, 1868) I am quite sure she passed no water, and remained in bed to the time of her death. There was a utensil in the room under another bed, in which I and my wife slept, but none under hers. She could not have used that utensil, *as she could not move*. Neither I nor my wife ever observed water in that or any other vessel which we had any reason to believe came from her. I am sure of this. She was sensible, except when in a fit, and sometimes had the fit several times in a day. The fit sometimes lasted a quarter of an hour, then an interval of about a quarter of an hour, and then the fit again in another quarter of an hour. The fits only occurred in the night time when awake. This state of things went on for a few weeks. I am quite sure about the water, because I always made the bed in November, 1867, when my wife was confined.

Strangers came in the first time during the spring of this year. We commenced to dress her in the manner described when she ceased to take food. The shopkeepers gave the ribbon. She had a crucifix before being taken ill. I cannot say who was the first person to give money. I do not remember ever taking money from any one. Hundreds came to see her, and many put a sixpence or a shilling on the girl's chest. I cannot say how much they left.

By Mr. Lloyd.—Another reason why I made the bed was that mother could not make it so well or so smooth. It was made every other day. Some excitement always preceded the discharges of urine. Last year she passed water after her grandfather died. She also made water when watched by strangers. She did so last summer after the cow died. She could cry like another child. When I consented to the present watching I had no reason to think she took food. Was never told by the doctor that my daughter's life was in peril from the commencement of the watching until the morning of the day of her death. Dr. Davies sent John Daniel, my brother-in-law, to tell me that the child got worse. What took place between me and Dr. Davies

was this. He said, "Would you not like to give her a dose of brandy and water?" I said "No; she has not been offered anything for two years, as she always gets ill when offered anything." He asked if he might offer it, and I said he was perfectly at liberty. Dr. Davies went to the parlour, and when he came back I asked him if he had offered her anything, and he said, "No;" he was afraid as she had been so long without food she would choke. Dr. Davies told me on Thursday night she was better than on the previous night, but in no danger.

By Mr. Bishop.—All her brothers had access to the bed room. I cannot say whether they could take food into the room, but believe she could not take food as it made her ill. None of the doctors told me that the child was dying for want of food; nor did the nurses. Dr. Hughes and Dr. Davies asked me on Thursday evening if I should like to get rid of the nurses, and I said I should not, because I did not see her getting worse, and I could do nothing for her, as she had been so long without food. If I had known the child was dying of starvation I certainly would not have refused.

By a Juror.—The candle was put out at night when she went to sleep.

By Mr. Bishop.—I found the scent bottle in the bed-clothes. I never found things concealed before.

The coroner read the whole of the evidence, and summed up ably. He could not understand how any rational person could believe the story of the girl's fasting. The urine and excrement must have come from something. He considered the doctors not to blame; they were deceived by the father. There were two branches of the inquiry; the first, the cause of death; and the second, who was responsible. As to the cause, there could be no question, it was starvation. As to the responsibility, it was the father's duty not merely to provide but also to induce the child to take food. The mother was not responsible unless it were proved she was given food by the father and kept some from the child. The criminal negligence of the father was only a question of degree. It was marvellous how the father could make so ingenious a story on oath, and endeavour to-day to impose on the jury with a hideous mass of nonsense. Was it easier to believe natural laws to be reversed, or that the father was stating falsehoods?

The jury deliberated about a quarter of an hour, and returned a verdict that the deceased died from starvation arising from the negligence of the father to induce the child to take food.

This, the coroner said, was equivalent to a verdict of manslaughter against the father, and he was committed for trial, but was allowed to be liberated on bail.

Before commenting on the father's statement I will give the following particulars of what appeared to be the state of the girl in the month of March, and which I do in the words of my friend, Mr. J. Burns, who visited Sarah Jacobs twice, and thus gives the result of his first visit:—

MR. BURNS' STATEMENT.

“ Soon after my arrival in Wales, I became aware of the ‘ Strange Story from Carmarthenshire,’ from a paragraph in the *Cambria Daily Leader*, of Feb. 24, 1869; and I resolved on making an investigation of the case as soon as my engagements would permit. Accordingly, when I reached Carmarthen, I first put myself in communication with the Rev. E. Jones, Vicar of Llanfihangel-ar-Arth, in whose parish the farm of Lletherneudd is situated, and where the girl, Sarah Jacobs, lives with her parents, who are farmers. To my request to be permitted to examine the case in company with him, I received a very courteous reply, stating that he would meet me at the farm, on the morning of Wednesday, March 10. I took the rail to Pencader, and reached the farm after a walk of two miles farther. I found the girl, Sarah Jacobs, lying on her back in bed, in the bed room which her parents occupy. The bed was covered over with books and pamphlets. I was much struck with the intelligent and pleasing aspect of her countenance. The face is round, the features small, sharp, and regular; the eyes are particularly brilliant and intelligent looking, and of a dark brown colour.

“ In length she measures about 4 feet 8 inches. She has not the power of moving her body. The left side is quite paralysed, but she can use the right hand a little, the skin of which is red, as if the blood were congested in the capillaries, as one's hand is when exposed to the cold. It felt cold and clammy, but readily increased in temperature by being held in my warm hands. Though the muscles are much shrunk and flaccid to the touch, yet she does not present an emaciated appearance. I could perceive no arterial action in the wrists, with the exception of a slight nervous flutter; but in the temples there was more to be perceived. On a subsequent visit the pulse was distinct and regular, but not strong; more vital heat was also apparent. Her face looks full and even healthy, and there is occasionally considerable flush on her cheeks. The skin of the face feels rather hard and flinty to the touch. Her temples are warm, as well as the other parts of her head. The brain seems to be quite active and under her control. She has fits several times a day, each lasting from three to four minutes. I saw her in one, she was apparently

unconscious; her eyes were nearly shut, a slight nervous tremor was visible in the head, and she breathed heavily. The eyes gradually opened and she looked up suddenly and stretched the muscles of her face as if waking from sleep. When in her normal state again her cheeks were more flushed than before.

“ I had heard some rumours of the history of the case—*viz.*, that she had existed without food or drink for a great length of time; but, after examining her, I made a series of inquiries, which Mr. Jones kindly repeated to the parents in Welsh, as the family do not speak English. She will be 12 years old in a few weeks. About the middle of February, 1867, she was seized with violent fits, from which she partially recovered. About six weeks later she had a continuous fit, during which she did not eat anything, but lay in a dozing unconscious state. About the end of April, she called for milk and took food for about two months, when she began to eat less and less, and only took a little cooked apple for a month or two. During the last 17 months her parents declare she has not eaten anything at all. She does not even desire drink; her lips had been wetted with a drop of water that morning, the first time since the previous Monday week. No evacuations from the body are noticed; but it becomes a question whether a little water is not perceptible sometimes. Contrary to expectation the abdomen is not in a collapsed state, it is quite full, and has the appearance of that of a person in health; sometimes it is distended beyond normal proportions. There seems to be a continual action of gases in the bowels and much flatus is voided during sleep. I was informed she was rather improved in health during the last few days; she sleeps better, and sometimes is even moved a little on one side in the morning, and her helpless limbs are slightly altered in position during sleep. She generally sleeps from about twelve at midnight until about four in the morning. Since she was taken ill, she has improved her mind very much; she reads a great deal, and enjoys the company of those who come to entertain her mentally. She has composed some verses of which she repeated a specimen, but as they were in Welsh, I can give no opinion of their merits. Her voice is rather high-keyed, sharp, and hurried. The question now arises—Does she positively live without food, and if so, by what means is the life sustained? I can neither affirm nor deny the statement that she has not taken food during the last 18 months. I only have the testimony of the parents which I can neither support nor deny. The father, however, declares that he is quite ready to allow any person or persons to live in the family and watch the case continually for any length of time.”

In May of last year the Rev. F. R. Young, Unitarian Minister of New Swindon, Wiltshire, visited the child in company with Mr. Jones, minister of the parish. His account agrees very much with that of Mr. Burns, and he thought, from all he saw and heard, the story of her fasting quite probable.

Now I entirely concur in the conclusion come to by Mr. Burns, that he was in no position to affirm or deny the abstinence from food, and had only the statement of the parents to that effect; but it appears to be admitted on all hands that the child was paralyzed and unable to move, and, therefore, that if she were fed her food must have been brought to her by others. If it were so, it could hardly be without the knowledge and connivance of the family generally, and this state of things would result.

The case attracted hardly any public attention for 12 months after its commencement; and the girl and her family must have devised and carried on this curiously absurd notion of proving an antecedent impossibility, almost privately amongst themselves, for that long period, for the object, we must suppose, of ultimately hoaxing the public either for notoriety or gain, or for both. If, however, the girl were comfortably fed the whole time, she would have no pangs of hunger or thirst to undergo, but would have only to lay in bed for a twelvemonth in the hope that she would at last attract the attention of the credulous part of the public, and that she and the family might then be enriched by their contributions, whilst they would be able to enjoy the hoax they were playing upon them. This would not read well, even in a farce; but besides we have the fact that the girl and all her family were quite willing to be found out by the doctors and the pressmen, and to have the death-watches from Guy's to prove they were not telling the truth. The result must either be death or detection; but these foolishly wicked people, who had already reaped their main harvest, were to sacrifice all, and, even the girl's life to this mere point of obstinacy, and she is supposed to have been a willing accomplice in the hands of her father to carry it out. This is what the doctors have got the public and a coroner and his jury to believe, though it does not look very well when it is put on paper. The family, too, must have been a very wicked one, and yet the clergyman has throughout had a good opinion of them, and knew them well as his parishioners.

Now what is there on the other side? The girl was paralyzed. She was the subject of hysteria which, in women, as hypochondria in men, is nothing but a species of somnambulism. She was subject to catalepsy, having fits several times a day, and at first was in one for some weeks almost continuously. This is a disease

which is often attended by ecstasis, and by anisia, and adipsia, and other abnormal symptoms of the most curious and abnormal kinds. There is also no doubt simulation of these states frequently attendant. I am also aware that the dislike of eating or of being known to eat, as well as the denial of eating, is not uncommonly met with in such cases; but I say that there are abundant cases which appear in the doctors' records in which no fraud has been found, nor can now be found, and that these cases are supported by as good evidence as most others which are currently received. There is also a large class of cases, quite as wonderful, both in man and the animal world which are believed and known, and the tendency of which is by analogy to strengthen the belief in the possibility of the former.

Such of these as cannot by any stretch of scepticism be disputed, as hybernation in its various forms, are quietly received, and their analogy is ignored; whilst others, such as the occurrence of frogs and toads in rocks for thousands of years, have lately begun to be denied, though history and modern times are full of instances of them. The fear of admitting anything which scientific ignorance cannot account for, and therefore fears may be a proof of the supernatural, or what the learned coroner in his sapience calls reversing the laws of nature, is resolutely denied, though it be of frequent occurrence, and no absurdity is too great for science to resort to, rather than admit it.

But how is it that the laws of nature can permit a ravenous bear to hybernate for half-a-year, or an alligator to summer-ate during the dry season in the torrid zone, and that such abnormal conditions shall be observed and admitted in numerous animals and insects, and yet that these same laws of nature should be said to be reversed when human instances of the same kind are mentioned? Why don't the faculty and the press send the nurses from Guy's to watch the bears and the crocodiles and the wheel insects of Spallanzani, and the mummy wheat, and flies drowned in Barclay and Perkins's beer which can be brought to life by being covered with lime, and the hair worm, which after being for years dried up, can, by being wetted, be found lively and happy at half-an-hour's notice? Why did not the nurses, in the interest of science, sit through their long death-watch over the frogs embedded in rocks, over the snails and chameleons shut up in glass cases with no fathers and family to bring them food on the sly, over the greedy spider kept from food for four months, over the beetle confined under a glass for three years with nothing but air for his diet? Why did not they take tent with Humboldt in South America when the alligator embedded in the deep clay woke up from beneath them, and scuttled off to the water in a slight earthquake caused by his quitting his sum-

mer's nest? Would the coroner like to see the laws of nature reversed in the wheel insects which can be apparently killed and revived a dozen times by drying and then applying moisture to them, or in the *vibris tritici* which has been restored after perfect torpitude and apparent death for five years and eight months by merely soaking it in water? Would the pressmen like to see in my greenhouse a specimen of the famous resurrection fern from Mexico, which, after being dried for months, will open out at any half-hour, when placed in a saucer of warm water? or snails revived by a little water thrown over them after remaining dry and torpid for 15 years? or would they like to watch the Fakir in India who was buried for 42 days several feet under ground, whilst a crop of barley was grown over him?

All these or many of these things, however, are admitted to be within the order of nature, for no other reason, and no better reason can exist, than that they occur; but still the next wonderful thing that is alleged to have occurred outside these, is at once virulently assailed as being outside the order of nature, and no abuse or insolence is too great to heap upon the head of the unlucky discoverer. The real reason of this is, that so large a portion of the world is not only ignorant necessarily, but in an eminently stupid state, as to everything beyond the bounds of its actual knowledge. Were it not for this the lives of discoverers would be much more happy; but now it requires almost a surgical operation to get anything new into people's heads, and scientific persons are generally the worst of them, from their weakness in believing that they know natural laws through and through. Their ignorance is the measure of their knowledge.

And whilst they are so incredulous in some things, they are blindly credulous in others, in ignoring all analogous facts and inventing others of the most improbable kind, and laying stress on things which have no bearing on the case.

So about this alleged Fasting Girl, we have seen the absurd story they believe, as to her and her family inventing the idea for the purpose of hoaxing the public out of its shillings and half-crowns, and ultimately dying with the horrible pangs of hunger and thirst rather than confess, and willingly having the nurses placed there to see the programme duly carried out. Then great stress is laid on the fact that the poor girl had a hollow under the armpit, "large enough to hold a half-pint bottle." It is not said it did hold a half-pint bottle, or that the girl had had the flesh cut away to make the hollow; but the public is at once as satisfied that the hollow contained a half-pint bottle of new milk every morning as if it had been found there, whereas I suppose that such a hollow would hold a piece of chalk, or a booby's brains, or any other substance not larger than itself.

Then, having settled that the case was necessarily one of imposture, a gentleman, who dates from the Admiralty, writes to the papers one of the wickedest suggestions which I have seen about the poor dying girl. In that supreme moment, when her soul was parting in the death-struggle with its earthly tenement, and just before she was entering upon the valley of the shadow of death, and before she had begun to lean upon the staff which is promised us through that dread journey, she turned up her face to her earthly parents and whispered, "Kiss me, papa." Has the Admiralty gentleman ever stood over a dying child? I have; and I say, God forgive him for making the infamous suggestion that she did this to give the father an opportunity of putting a Liebig beef lozenge from his mouth into hers. And yet newspapers print such an abomination with approval, and may, perhaps, publicly recommend the Admiralty clerk for promotion, whilst the father takes his trial for manslaughter.

Again it has been assumed, but without the slightest attempt at proof, and with no affirmative evidence having appeared throughout the inquiry, that the girl has been supplied with food during the two years. This of itself involves her and her family in the scandalous fraud during that long period, culminating in her murder and suicide in order to avoid being found out, and her endurance during the eight days' watching of the pangs of hunger and thirst. This is another specimen of the credulity of the public, because all this is believed on no evidence whatever, excepting the assumption that no one can long live without food, which itself has to be proved.

Then again it is assumed that the girl died of hunger. Of that also there is no proof. All that is known as to that is that she died, but it is quite possible that she did not die of hunger; but of the breaking of those magnetic conditions which had hitherto enabled her to support life without food, and, by the circumstances brought to bear on her by the presence of the nurses, as detailed in the letter of Mr. Howitt which will be appended. The question would remain, in any case in which similar watching and violent precautions and pulling about and driving into fits were taken by four nurses, whether the patient died of the nurses or of the hunger, and whether the critical nervous and magnetic conditions could withstand such unsympathetic elements. Yet the public has jumped to the conclusion that she died of hunger. The doctors imply by the antecedent impossibility theory, that every case which is watched must end in the same way, by death. This, too, requires to be proved as well as asserted, and in the numerous cases I shall cite, the doctors will have to assume that those cases were not duly watched and recorded. I invite them to the proof of this, well

knowing that they have none to offer. If they allege a universal law, I deny the universality, and ask them to prove the contrary in the face of their own recorded cases which cannot now be further investigated. Until every single case can be got rid of, there is a case for enquiry, and science should hold itself open, instead of blindly shutting its eyes, because it foolishly fears to face the facts, on account of supposititious "laws of nature" which it knows next to nothing about.

Again, it is alleged by the surgeons at the inquest, that in the colon and rectum there was about half a pound of excrement in a hard state; and Mr. James Thomas, a surgeon, added that it was no more possible that there could be excrement without food, than ashes without fuel. One surgeon stated that it might have lain in the body a fortnight, the other stated it might have been there five or six weeks. I am informed on the other hand by several physicians of eminence, that no medical man can say how much or how little excrementitious matter is produced from other sources than ordinary food, nor how long it may not remain in the intestines.

My friend Mr. Lloyd, the naturalist and bear-hunter of Sweden, tells me that, during their hybernation, bears always have a *tapp* or plug in the rectum, and that on their emerging from their six months' sleep, the forests resound with their cries, whilst they are getting rid of it. He also says, that near their winter quarters may be seen trees which are scored and torn with their claws, whilst they are in their throes of agony.

Homer knew that the use of food is the formation of the blood, and he says, "The gods neither eat food nor drink the purple wine, *wherefore* they are bloodless."—*Iliad*, v. 341.

Hippocrates, in his celebrated aphorism, says that there is only one food, though there exist many forms of food, and that the digestive organs always separate from our food, however various, precisely the same elements.

In the smaller intestines there are papillæ for the absorption of nutritious juices, but in the larger intestines these are seldom met with, but instead of them, minute glands, called follicles, exist which have the contrary office of excreting foul matters from the venous blood; and these excretions largely add to the quantity of the fæces, so that from the moment of food entering by the mouth, it yields its highest nutrition to the papillæ of the tongue, and throughout its passages it is constantly yielding up its nutriment to the papillæ of the different organs of digestion, until all is extracted, and then it passes into the lower and larger intestines, as an effete mass, and has added to it in its course the above excreta from the blood. The bile also contributes great elements for excretions, and the liver secretes bile, and excretes

what it cannot convert into useful product into the duodenum. This opinion of the doctors, therefore, that excreta can come only direct from food, and not from the blood and the bile, and indeed from all the secreting and excreting organs of the abdomen, is not correct, and yet it is the one which the public has been made to believe is conclusive of the fraud.

The same argument applies as to the urinary secretion, as to which I shall give instances from Dr. Carpenter's *Physiology* and other works, to shew large secretions without drinking. In one instance, of 30 ounces secreted from the atmosphere within an hour; and in another, of 100 pounds' weight within a few days. I am accustomed to use the Turkish bath, and to lose about two pounds' weight in it; and I am informed, though I have not proved it by experiment, that I make up the loss during my walk up Regent Street. There is intrinsic evidence, too, involuntarily given in the father's statement to the jury, of the urinary excretions being made seldom, and returning under strong excitement, as, for instance, "when the cow died." This seems very laughable and funny even, but it bears the impress of probability. It is well known how these secretions and excretions are influenced by fear and excitement. Hudibras tells us that "Man is not master of his posteriors in disaster." In the *Animal Kingdom*, it is stated that there are feeding pores and subtly chyloferous fibres and vessels whose office it is to extract elements from the atmosphere, and that "ecstasis and catalepsy nourish the blood with a kind of mystic food." Here is the very case of this poor girl illustrated. It is no answer to this to say that editors of newspapers and coroners cannot ordinarily exist without a "full trough;" but the question is, whether or not there be abnormal states of the body which enable it to dispense with ordinary food? I say ordinary food, because I have shown that there is other than ordinary food, which may and does form and nourish the blood, which is the sole office of food of every kind.

There is another point brought out on the post-mortem examination of some importance. The doctors state that the body was plump, and that on an incision being made from the top of the chest to the lower part of the body, fine layers of fat from half an inch to an inch in thickness were displayed. As to the probability of the formation of fat, even, under fasting, I find the following in the *Penny Cyclopædia*, tit., "Adipose Substance.—When the secretions and excretions are suppressed, the system is lightened of a burden, and the circulating system is relieved of a fulness and tension of its vessels, by the deposition of fat. This forms a supply failing the ordinary sources derived from food, which the absorbent vessels take up, and convey it to the veins.

The veins transmit it to the lungs and supply them with the necessary carbon for the production of animal heat. No other solid is ever formed in the body so quickly as this sometimes is. In some animals, *in certain states of the atmosphere*, a prodigious accumulation is said to take place in the course of a few hours. Bichat states that after a fog of 24 hours, thrushes, wheatears, ortolans and redbreasts are sometimes observed to become so fat that they are unable to fly. Excessive sleep, together with the absence of physical and intellectual exertion, is highly conducive to the accumulation of fat."

All these conditions existed in the girl, and the very existence of this thick layer of fat is itself rather remarkable in a case of starvation. I fancy there are no layers of fat in the sad cases of starvation on which the London coroners are often sitting; but then the subjects of them are not cataleptic and hysterical patients, and have not been laying in bed, with paralysis and with no physical exertion, for two years.

I have another gentleman to deal with: "Dr. Hughes, late House Physician and Resident Physician-Accoucheur to the University Hospital, London," who has written to the papers with some self-satisfaction to say that, "Having been the first doctor to deny the truthfulness of the case, and having had the honour of appearing before the magistrates, owing to it," he lectures the public for its ignorance and credulity in going through the unnecessary form of watching. He then exclaims, "Why not appeal to the heads of the faculty, and be satisfied? We have not a case of fasting on record (ONLY ONE EVEN IN THE TIMES OF MIRACLES)." This I shall shew is incorrect, and Dr. Hughes ought to have known it; but what of his allusion to the "only one even in the times of miracles?" There is again the foregone conclusion, that if it be true it must be a miracle, and there are no miracles. But as to this one supreme case which the doctor refers to in these words. Does the doctor believe in the occurrence of that one? and if it had happened in 1870, what would the doctor and his compeers have said of it? I can tell them. They would have treated it in the same way as they have done Sarah Jacobs's father, and as the Jews treated that case of fasting. Even Lent has vanished pretty completely from Protestant England, and "the full trough" every day in the year has taken its place, to the great advantage of the doctors, who, after their good dinner, washed down with a bottle of claret, may well disbelieve in the powers of fasting, and smooth themselves with their intimate acquaintance with the laws of nature.

One cannot expect much better from the *Lancet* and the other medical papers, which reflect the spirit of the time, and which have dissected miracles out of humanity, and it is really best to let them

alone. Their credulity enables them to believe or disbelieve anything that favours their theories, and their ignorance of occurrences out of the common way, because they are in abject fear and dread of these things being miraculous because they are not understood. A vain and unphilosophic notion which has no base to rest upon. But in Paris recently there have been some sad instances of some of these sceptical professors having their stupid notions too roughly disproved, and the fibres of their brains wrenched by the discovery. I should not be sorry if some of ours could be cured by more gentle means, but I have little hope of them.

The press and the doctors have made it impossible now to procure a proper and scientific investigation of these curious instances. In 1852, they made a fierce attack on Elizabeth Squirrell, and upon all who attempted to investigate her case. In 1869, they furiously attacked the clergyman who first mentioned the case of the Welsh girl, and charged him with being a fool, and the girl herself and her father and family with being gross impostors. If any similar case should occur, is it likely that it will be made public, so as to enable any one to investigate it, at the risk of all this abuse, and of a trial for manslaughter? And then, after the lapse of a few years, when no more cases are known to occur, their absence from medical records will be appealed to as a proof of their non-occurrence, and the doctors will plume themselves on their knowledge of the unvarying laws of nature. This is a sure result of the attitude assumed by the professors of science, who have only succeeded in making a mystery more mysterious, and in preventing proof on either side from coming forward. They cannot however blot out the numerous cases from their own records, and while these exist, they can be appealed to against the judgment of the doctors.

I now appeal to such of the public as can overcome their prejudices, to give the girl's father fair play on his trial for manslaughter, and if there be no proof against him but the scepticism of the doctors and the press, to turn their indignation against those who have misled them. Several friends have offered to subscribe funds for the defence, in order that both sides of the question may be heard. I should be glad if a good advocate can be retained, who will not only read to the court and jury all the cases I cite, but as many more as can be found; and call as witnesses, Elizabeth Squirrell, who is said to have fasted for 25 weeks in 1852, and as many of her watchers as are still living. Some medical men too, might be found, who would, in the interests of truth, give their opinion in favour of the possibility of such cases.

SPIRITUALISM IN CLERKENWELL.

THE St. John's Association of Spiritualists is a society of about 50 members, in the midst of the working population of watch-makers and jewellers of Clerkenwell. It holds regular weekly meetings, and occasionally public lectures on Spiritualism are given under its auspices in St. John's Temperance Hall, Corporation Row, Clerkenwell. In this Hall its first half-yearly meeting was held December 9th last, when about 80 persons sat down to tea. After tea several addresses were given by members and friends, consisting for the most part of the relation of their several experiences in Spiritualism. Some of these were of more than ordinary interest: we present them, with a little abridgment, as we regard the experiences and sentiments of these plain, honest, and sensible working men to be altogether reliable, and worthy of being placed on record. After a few introductory remarks from Mr. Cresswell, the chairman—

Mr. STEELE said:—I first saw the spiritual manifestations in the room in which I am speaking; and Messrs. Cresswell, Davis, and Blackwell, were present. I thought all I then witnessed was contemptible rubbish, but I attended twice more, and my curiosity being aroused, I joined the society for the sake of obtaining regular admittance. After a time I discontinued my visits, and at last I said to my wife, who had been a Spiritualist for some time, "If you go to that place again I'll go to St. Luke's madhouse and get a straight jacket for you, and another for Davis." However, I attended once more, and the spirits selected me and ten other persons to sit at a dark *séance*. At that *séance* Mr. Davis was entranced, and repeated to me the dying words of my son. This son had died a year before I knew Mr. Davis, and I had never spoken to the latter on the subject. The words were, "Good bye, God bless you! You'll never forget me, will you!" Davis finished by saying, "Is there anybody here who remembers these words?" I shouted "Yes, I do." Davis replied, "I should think you do, father." A short time afterwards, a medium, Miss Dixon, came to my house. When I entered the parlour to speak to her she went into a trance upon the sofa. I felt very uncomfortable to see a strange young woman apparently fainting in my house, as I did not know how to bring her round, and was not used to that sort of thing. I thought to myself, "Here's a pretty pickle I'm in!" She rose from the sofa, bent one foot so that she walked on the edge of it, drew up one arm into a cramped position, and limped in a peculiar way across the room. I said,

"Why, that's my mother!" The medium, who never knew my mother, replied, "Yes, my boy, it is." My mother had died many years before, and was much afflicted with paralysis. Another spirit, purporting to be my son, spoke to me through Miss Dixon, and said, "Father, you once made me an earthly promise." I replied, "Yes;" for shortly before my son died the boy asked me to always wear a ring on my finger in remembrance of him, with the date of his birth, death, and burial, engraved on it. I had not kept this promise, and had not told my wife about it, because I knew that if I did she would always be pressing me to wear the ring. My son, through the medium, continued, "Will you now make me a spiritual promise?" I replied, "Yes, but will you tell me what was to be inside the ring?" The answer was, "Do you want me to tell you more than the three dates?" "No," I said, "I am satisfied." And I *was* satisfied, for no being on earth but myself knew the private conversation between me and my son about the ring.

Mr. AVERY (from America) related the following experiences:—In the August of 1861 I was told through a trance medium that my little daughter, who was very ill, was suffering from a bad rupture, and would soon enter the spirit-world, although a short time before the change she would appear to be much better. In October I received, through a drawing medium, an accurate likeness of my grandfather, who had then been in the spirit-world for many years. The medium was a stranger to me, and lived 500 miles from the locality where my grandfather spent his life while on earth. The portrait was recognised by all who had known him. About this time my daughter got worse again. She was very sick, and she told me that she would come back to me sometimes from the spirit-world if she could. Through my own mediumship I was told several days in advance that she would pass away on one particular Sunday, a little after 12 o'clock. Everything took place as predicted. In the following December I went to New York, and while in my sister's house a woman, a medium, entered in the trance state, and I heard my child's voice saying, "Where's Pa?" She added, "I'm Lavinia. Pa! Didn't I tell you I'd come back again?" She talked with me for some time, and told me that in a short time she would find out a way of convincing her mother through a medium. The following summer my wife went to Philadelphia, and said she was going to see some clairvoyant, "Because that's not Spiritualism, you know." She went to a clairvoyant, and received more than she expected. When she entered the room, the clairvoyant walked up to her and said, "Mother! mother!" and the spirit of her child forthwith told the whole history of her life, as

well as many things which occurred before she was born, and which were known to no one on earth but her mother. From that time forth my wife never said another word about the foolishness of Spiritualism. It is one thing to get evidence like this, and another thing to obtain the pure love which belongs to the spirit-world, and then act it out in daily life. God is Love: and to be true Spiritualists, you must love all men as your brothers. When you do that, heaven is within you, and it is yours.

Mr. DAVIS said:—I once thoroughly disbelieved and disliked Spiritualism, but at the inducement of a friend I went with him to see "the jugglery" at the house of Mr. Blackwell in Bunhill Row. Many of the persons present on that occasion I see before me. I saw the table moving about, and said with a laugh, "Why anybody can do that;" and, turning to my friend, I said, "Let's put our hands on this table, and see whether it will move for us." It was a heavy four-legged table with coffee cups on it. Directly our hands touched it, it began to move. I turned red, and said to my friend, "You did that." "No, I didn't; you did it," he replied, and we began to quarrel. I said, "Well, let's try again, and you be honest this time." "I was before," he rejoined, and the quarrel was renewed. However, we tried again, and not only did the table move, but another small table, with nobody near it, quietly walked by itself, in three strides, several feet along the floor up to me. I jumped up and laid hold of the table, which I examined for springs and wires, but could find none. I did not follow up the subject for some months afterwards, but I was very much perplexed; and, at last, I joined an experimental circle of six persons, who resolved to try for themselves, and to investigate Spiritualism thoroughly. We obtained the manifestations: we then searched the Bible to discover its connection with the subject, and found that its teachings and those of the spirits were in all essential points the same. A few weeks after the formation of the circle, the spirits told me that they were going to make me a trance medium. Partial entrancement came on at times, but I had no confidence in my own mediumship, and thought it was something springing from my own brain or physical body, and not from spirits. One night, at a circle, I had this thought in my mind, and a writing medium present wrote out very swiftly, "You have been doubting your own entrancement; don't do it again, or it will be to your own injury." From that time my doubts about the reality of the power were gradually removed, and I have found my mediumship to be a great blessing—a source of happiness, quietness, and ease of mind—a divine influence springing from the love of Almighty God.

Mr. WOOLNOUGH, among other experiences, related the following:—One evening, at Mr. Cresswell's, an aunt of mine signalled through the table. This aunt died before I was born, and I did not know that such a person had ever lived, neither did my friends at home know of her; but after searching for the particulars in a book, they found out that what was said at the circle was quite true.

The CHAIRMAN said: I am very pleased to see Mr. Shorter present, as he has not attended any of our meetings previously, and I am sure that everybody present would like to hear a few words from him.

Mr. SHORTER said:—With great pleasure I accepted the invitation to be with you this evening, and now respond to the call of our Chairman;—a pleasure arising partly from local associations, having been born and having spent the early part of my life in your immediate neighbourhood; but chiefly, from the interest I feel in the cause you are associated to promote, and which I am happy to see has brought so many together to-night. I was glad to learn that an Association of Spiritualists had been formed in Clerkenwell; for while I know that Spiritualism has no exclusive sympathies with any class or creed—that its sympathies embrace the entire family of man—I yet feel that the convictions which Spiritualism brings, and the consolations it imparts, are specially needed by and adapted to struggling, sorrowing, toiling men and women such as those of whom your Association is chiefly composed, and representing as it does the general character of the people amongst whom its useful labours are carried on. None but those who have lived amongst them and shared their experiences, as I have done, can fully realize how hard are the conditions of life, how heavy the burdens, how severe the trials to which they are often subject. They, perhaps more than all others, need to be lifted up above the ceaseless, petty anxieties of daily life, need to be strengthened and sustained in their times of weakness and sorrow, of suffering and bereavement; need the assurance and the knowledge which Spiritualism gives of a rest and peace that remaineth, of a higher and immortal life of reunion with all that they desire and love, and of never-ending progress. I am glad, too, to learn that your Association, though still in its infancy, is strong and healthy, and gives promise of long and vigorous life. I doubt not that as time rolls on it will grow in strength and wisdom, and be a means of great and lasting good to all who may be brought under its influence. You will meet, and doubtless have met, with difficulties and discouragements, disappointments and failures; but these are incident to every good and useful work. Every man of science who has been fortunate enough to add

to its domain will tell you that it has been only by persistent effort, and after many experiments and many failures, that he has at length attained to any measure of success. Truth does not lie by the wayside to be picked up by every casual hand. According to the old proverb it lies at the bottom of a well, and you cannot get it without much boring and sinking for it.

The speakers who have preceded me have narrated their several experiences, and I am sure that all who have heard them, whether Spiritualists or not, must at least have been impressed with their obvious sincerity and earnestness. I shall not follow their example. My early experience in Spiritualism is now an old story; it was published more than a dozen years ago, when such experiences were not so common as they are now, and need not here be repeated; it is probably already known to some among you. I need only say that subsequent experience has but confirmed and deepened my convictions, has opened up new springs of thought to me, and has shown me how little in this direction we really know in comparison with the infinite unknown that lies beyond. In connection however with the experiences which Spiritualists relate I have one remark to make, for the benefit more particularly of any strangers who may be present. It is often objected that some of the manifestations which commonly occur, especially at the beginning of these experiences—such as rappings and movings of furniture; and sometimes, too, the communications given by these and other means, are too trivial to be attributed to any spiritual agency. With regard to the latter I may observe that many of these messages are of a personal and family nature, having for strangers perhaps but little interest or value, yet sacred to the private heart, and very precious to those to whom they are more immediately addressed; and others, as well as the manifestations alluded to, derive significance and value from their special adaptation to the circumstances, characters, and states of mind of those to whom they are primarily given. Nor should we forget that things are trivial or important not according to the *means*, but according to the *ends* for which they are employed, and to which they lead. It was a trivial thing for a philosopher like Franklin to fly a kite with a wet string, and a door key attached to the tail of the kite; it was a trivial thing in the boy Watt to watch the steam from the spout of the tea-kettle; yet the one led to the lightning conductor, and the other to the steam engine. Thus considered, even these despised “trivial” manifestations are no longer insignificant; they meet the materialist on his own ground; they bring home to him by sensuous demonstration the reality of spirit-life, often when all other means have failed to do so. Spiritualism then,

if it be a truth, is surely one of no slight magnitude. It brings the evidence of immortality within the apprehension and to the heart of the simple-minded but sincere seeker for truth; it for ever banishes gloom and doubt, and transforms an impotent and halting faith into the certitude of knowledge. More than this, it makes us realise that the loved ones whose bodies we had laid in the grave, and whom we feared were wholly lost to us—perhaps for ever—still live, and are still with us, not in any figure of speech, but really, truly with us—more really and truly because more interiorly with us than when visibly in our midst; that their sympathies flow towards us and mingle with our own; that they encircle us in the arms of a true and pure affection;—that Death is not an eternal sleep, but the true awakening; that he is not the grim and grisly King of Terrors he has been depicted, but a beneficent angel who, if he strips from us this muddy vesture of decay, does so only to robe us in those bright and beautiful garments of immortality which are fadeless and incorruptible; and who closes against us the door of mortal life, only that with gentle kindly hand he may open for us the flower-encircled door of the Summer-Land to join us to the glorious company of beatified souls, and unite us for ever to those we love.

Mr. OVERTON (an Australian) said:—I know that spirits still live with their friends on earth, and guide them, as I am a little bit of a medium myself. I have travelled much in the world, and have found that when humble enough to be guided by them, they have done me and others a great deal of good.

Mr. TOWNS said:—I never sought Spiritualism, but Spiritualism sought me. I knew the preceding speaker (Mr. Overton) six years ago, when we were both living in Melbourne, Australia. We lost sight of each other, and both came to England about the same time, though neither knew that the other was returning. One day on returning to my house in Clerkenwell, my wife told me that Mr. Overton had called to see me, which surprised me very much, as I did not know how Mr. Overton could be in England, or how he discovered my address. Next day Mr. Overton called again, and said he had been told to come to that address by the spirits, who had also stated that I was a medium. I told Mr. Overton that I should like to see something of Spiritualism, and on the following Sunday Mr. Overton brought a Mr. Hillman with him, and we had a *séance*. We sat round a table, which soon began to move. The table spelt out my father's name, and where he used to live. Then came statements of fact which I knew could not be known by Mr. Overton or Mr. Hillman. After they had gone I sat down very seriously, and told my wife I would try for half-an-hour if I could get some

more communications. After earnest prayer I made the trial; the manifestations soon began, and answers were given to mental and other questions, at which Mrs. Towns was much alarmed. From that time I began to attend spirit circles. Soon I began to feel the effects upon myself of this strange power. Among other strange things they have caused me to do, *I have been made to hold my hands in gas flames where they were not hurt.* On one occasion, at a *séance* with Mrs. Marshall, grapes were given me, with the remark, "There's one apiece for each of your five children at home; the other six are with us here." Neither Mrs. Marshall nor any other person present but myself knew of my six children in the spirit-world.

Mr. MORSE said:—I first heard of Spiritualism by reading the trial of "Lyon v. Home," and I then considered it to be partly mesmerism, partly imagination, and partly trickery. Still I saw that respectable persons, more intelligent than myself, testified to its truth, so I thought I was not justified in condemning it without investigation. Accordingly I went to Mr. Cogman's circle, at the East-end, to expose it. After sitting about 20 minutes I felt as if my head was split open and a shovel-full of sand dropped in. Then a power stronger than myself made me get up and begin to shout and roar, though all the time I was conscious of my acts, and very much ashamed of my behaviour. This influence made me thus misbehave myself for half-an-hour, and then it left me. I was very much exhausted, and not a little out of temper, for I felt that I had attended there to expose others and been "taken in" myself. On the fourth Sunday of my attendance at Mr. Cogman's circle better influences controlled me, and I was made to take the Bible, give out a text, and preach a sermon for half-an-hour, and those present declared the discourse to be very good. I now and then had a faint dreamy consciousness of what my mouth was saying. For a long time the control of the spirits over me was imperfect, and there was much stuttering when they tried to speak through me. For months I did not believe that spirits had anything to do with it, and thought that it was something connected with my own bodily or mental organization which I did not quite understand. But on one occasion I chanced to be at a circle where a seeing medium was present, who not only described my spirit friends most accurately, but gave their names in addition. This young man was a stranger to me, and had never seen me but once before. Later still I was developed as a writing medium, and have received a long communication, signed with the name of my mother, telling me much about my future life. The first part of it has since proved true, and I hope that it will

be the same with the rest. Then seeing mediumship came on at intervals. The spirits have made me lead a better life than I ever did before. They have made me break off several bad habits by gently reasoning with me, and pointing out what the consequences would be if I persisted in them. Thus my guardian spirit has, by advice, induced me to leave off smoking tobacco and drinking intoxicating liquors.

Mr. CROCKETT stated that he had seen a young man lifted, chair and all, three times off the floor, without visible agency, in the presence of more than a dozen persons.

Mr. YOUNG narrated evidence in favour of Spiritualism, and said that he would leave it to his wife, who was present, to say whether their home had been made more like hell or more like heaven since he became a Spiritualist.

Mr. PEARCE proposed a vote of thanks to the chairman and speakers, which was seconded and carried by acclamation.

SPIRITUALISM IN THE ISLE OF WIGHT.

WE quote the following from the *Isle of Wight Times* :—

“‘THE REALITY OF A SPIRIT WORLD DEMONSTRATED.’—Under this title, Mr. R. F. Rippon, who has visited our town under the auspices of the Ryde Dialectical Society, delivered two lectures on Spiritualism, in the Town Hall, on Thursday and Friday last. . . . He gave many interesting details of his experiences as a Spiritualist; and played several impromptu pieces, which, he said, were direct inspirations from the spirit-world. He added that at times he could see the spirits of eminent composers standing by his side whilst he was playing, and that sometimes his hand was raised from the piano, whilst the keys were pressed by supernatural agency. His playing was of the most wonderful description we have ever heard, and at the same time there was an inexpressible weirdness in the sounds which emanated from the instrument. Some of the audience declared that they could hear the tones of a human voice issuing from the pianoforte. He also exhibited some beautifully correct drawings and paintings of insects and other natural objects, which he had made, he said, by spiritual agency. He was not, naturally, he declared, endued with any talent for drawing, and it was only after a drawing medium had laid his hand on his that he acquired the wonderful power he now possesses. Of the

paintings exhibited by Mr. Rippon, it would be impossible for a naturalist to speak too highly. His flowers stand out upon the background in all the transparent delicacy, richness of colouring, and charm of actual life. His insects are, if possible, even still more wondrously perfect. Surely art never more successfully invaded the confines of nature than in the enchanting portraiture of Mr. Rippon."

Mr. F. N. Broderick, of Ryde, in the course of a letter to the editor of the *Isle of Wight Times* on the preceding paragraph, writes:—

"So far as I have been able to learn, all those persons who were present on the first of Mr. Rippon's entertainments noticed the remarkable semblance to a human voice referred to in your report. The illusion was so perfect that I turned involuntarily to the gentleman sitting next to me, convinced that he was violating good taste by joining in the air, but I found that he was silently absorbed in the performance. During Mr. Rippon's rendering of 'Home, sweet Home,' the rich cadence of what seemed unmistakably a human voice was particularly noticeable even above the full power of the bass notes. From subsequent observation, I was convinced that the sound emanated from the pianoforte, but the nature of the magical manipulation which produced it can best be solved by those who are familiar with that superb instrument."

In reply to a letter signed "CANTAB," impugning some of the foregoing statements, Mr. Rippon sent the following letter, which appeared in the *Isle of Wight Times* of January 15th.

Sir,—I feel it due to myself, to Spiritualism, and to the Ryde Dialectical Society that I should not allow "Cantab's" letter to go by unnoticed. 1st.—Some years ago I visited a large number of towns in company with my friend Mr. Simeon Smithard, the popular temperance orator. In the arrangements of his meetings, my parts (I being an ardent teetotaler, as I still am) were to accompany his songs, and to play generally three or four solos during the evening. As these meetings were largely attended, "Cantab" was likely to have been present at one of them. 2nd.—The piano solos played by me were always strictly what the world called *extemporaneous*, even though a title might for convenience sake have been announced for them beforehand. That is, I had no idea when seating myself at the piano what I should play, save that in some cases there were vague conceptions that—according to published announcement—some popular airs would be introduced somewhere into certain of them. These solos were played by me without the slightest effort of thought—generally while my mind was deeply absorbed in something quite foreign to the subject of music. On several occasions some people who were told that my solos were not by various recognised composers, as they had imagined, immediately formed an impression that I could only play my own music, and would be unable to recite the published compositions of other men. My friend Mr. Smithard being rather annoyed at this, frequently, without my sanction, challenged any one to bring the most difficult piece by Thalberg, Beethoven or any other master, and if I had never seen it I should certainly be able to play it correctly and gracefully at sight. On an evening when one of these challenges was given, "Cantab" was evidently present. 3rd.—I never, publicly or privately, at that time spoke of this power as having a spiritual source that I am aware of, because it was not convenient for

me to do so, either in my own interest or that which was so dear to me, the interest of the Total Abstinence movement. I simply had a great gift to serve the two interests. Neither did I mention it fully to Mr. Smithard, that I can remember (although he knew I was a Spiritualist in belief) because at that time he was, I felt, much prejudiced against Spiritualism, and it would have done no good. Nevertheless its origin *was spiritual*. I solemnly affirm that this power, which the newspapers several times spoke of as being remarkable, and of some of the solos as being almost supernatural in their strange and wonderful beauty, came through me from the spirit world—from God, the great master of spirits—sometimes, by His permission, I believe from the spirits of departed composers. *4th.*—I was taught music naturally. I studied under my late father, whose valuable tuition began when I was six and a half years old, and ceased about my eleventh year, after which I had no more training. But from the time when I could play only a few easy exercises my strange power of improving revealed itself, being at its greatest strength at that period after dark. That power has never left me night or day. During the years that have passed since, I have played some thousands of solos, and no two alike in any respect. I am quite unable to play the same thing a second time. When the music has been heard it is forgotten by me for ever. Within the last four or five years I have thought it right to acknowledge this, both publicly and privately, as I have opportunity. *5th.*—My power on the piano is not the result of great practice, for since my twelfth year I have had no piano to practise upon, and for years now I have only seen an instrument when at a public meeting, or at the house of a friend. Months often pass by without my touching an instrument, but for all that my power increases. It matters little how I put my hands upon the key-board, for I am unable to produce a real discord even if I try. In the exercise of this power all rules of art in fingering are set at defiance, and sometimes other phenomena are developed as well. I may add that this power of improving extends in me to several other departments of intellectual or spiritual labour, and is not confined to my musical gift. *6th.*—I may offer a summary of my Spiritualist professions in the statement that I was taught music *naturally*, and immediately developed without human aid in the power of producing music that was not of the natural order, but often far above it—so far that no system of notation at present in use could serve for its representation, even if I were able to remember it so as to write it down. That in art I could not six years ago draw the simplest form in nature, and had never been able—that I suddenly had the power of drawing and then of painting given me; first to depict natural objects and next the spiritual and ideal—a gift which enables me now, I can fearlessly say, to produce work in several natural and ideal departments more perfect and beautiful than any human hand has ever done before, and this power is also daily increasing in perfection. For each and all my gifts I ever feel that the glory is due to God and not to me. I am only the medium through whom He deigns to reveal some of His beautiful thoughts, and I wish to be no more than this. I think that is honour enough. *7th.*—I beg to inform “Cantab” that in the public meeting to which he refers I never attributed my musical gifts to natural or spiritual power; so far as I was personally concerned I left the public to form its own conclusions. Lastly, I regret much that “Cantab” finds a law ruling his mind, so that a thing he so greatly admired when supposing its origin to be the result of natural ability, would disgust him if discovered to come from a higher source; for, according to this, whether he admitted it or not, he must be disgusted with many of the sublimest creations on the earth; for there is many a noble picture or group of sculpture, &c., in the production of which the artists were often so fully inspired that their works may have been said to have been given from heaven through their mediumship; and he certainly must not admire *any* of the wonderful creations of this beautiful world, for they were and are *all* made by a very great Spirit.—I am, Sir, &c.,

ROBERT H. F. RIPPON.

SAMPLES OF EVIDENCE FOR SPIRITUAL
PHENOMENA.

By ROBERT DALE OWEN.

"Are they not all ministering spirits?"—*Hebrews* i. 14.

IF it sound ungracious, still it is true; and therefore, it ought to be said, that the literature of modern Spiritualism, with honourable exceptions, lacks precision and culture, and often runs altogether too much into the vague and the transcendental. If we would succeed in working out any science, we must begin at the beginning. We have not yet sufficiently studied the physics of Spiritualism; we are scantily prepared for its metaphysics, which, as etymology suggests, should come *after* an examination of sensible phenomena.

The mental phenomena connected with Spiritualism, are indeed more important and more convincing than the purely material. But both classes of phenomena must be examined, as Bacon examined nature, by the inductive method: in other words, we must ascend from particular facts to general principles. Mere wild, dreamy bursts of mysticism are valueless and revolting to the common sense of our day. I hope, by and bye, to see much of the space which, in papers friendly to Spiritualism, is now too often occupied by the reveries of writers who seem to think sentiment is elevated in proportion as it is obscure, filled by valuable contributions to the evidences of Spiritualism itself.

But, as the market price of the diamond or the pearl augments, in an immensely increasing ratio, according to the size of the gem, so does the value of a piece of spiritual evidence rise, in proportion as the phenomena have been critically observed and are strictly authenticated. Quality, not quantity, is the one thing needed.

Mere hearsay, in such matters, is absolutely worthless. The law demands, where it is possible, specifications of time and place and persons; nor does it ever admit, at second-hand, what can be directly proved. To these rules, whenever we can, we should adhere. And in describing a spiritual phenomenon, whether observed by ourselves or obtained from a witness, we should give even what may seem trifling details, if we are sure they are exact.

It is laborious to obtain such testimony. So also is it laborious to disinter a diamond of twenty carats, or to fish up a pearl as large as an okra-seed.

A single example, observed with minute accuracy, recorded on the spot at the time, verified by the name of the witness, and

described with sufficient detail, is worth far more (in proof, say, of the actuality of apparitions,) than a volume of slackly-attested tales.

In the present state of public opinion, however, it often unfortunately happens that an author is not permitted to give the name of his informant. Yet, if it be a writer in whom the public confides, his voucher for the character of the witness may be as good as the name itself, especially if it be a name unknown outside of a private circle.

All other things being equal, spontaneous phenomena, neither sought nor expected,—even unwelcome perhaps—and occurring in the privacy of the domestic circle, are often the most conclusive. As to such, there can be no suspicion that the observer has been misled by epidemic excitement or expectant attention.

Such an one, communicated to me two years ago by the subject of it, I here select. It illustrates a pleasant phase of ultra-mundane intervention—that of Spiritual Guardianship.

WAS IT MATERNAL LOVE ?

A lady of wealth and social position, for whose standing and veracity I can vouch, and whom I shall call Mrs. Barclay, a resident of one of the principal cities of the United States, lost, by death, a few years since, a sister-in-law, who left several children of tender age.

Up to that time, Mrs. Barclay had never seen what is usually called an apparition. She had lost, some years before, a husband, whose death had been rendered peaceful and happy, by his firm belief in spiritual intervention, and by glimpses, on his death-bed, of the spirit-land to which he was hastening; and so far she was favourably disposed to Spiritualism.

Soon after the sister-in-law's death, that lady appeared to Mrs. Barclay, passing before her; but, at first, without sound or speech. The figure was not shadowy or semi-transparent, but opaque, to all appearance material, and dressed as in life. It never appeared except in her own bed-chamber; and it did not pass out of the room, but faded away gradually. There was no sound of footstep nor rustling dress, yet the figure seemed to walk, not to glide. The appearance was repeated, at intervals, several times. Once only it spoke; and then to pronounce, in what seemed a natural tone of voice, a single word—the word "*children.*"

Mrs. Barclay related these facts to her immediate relatives, and, among others, to her brother. They received them as men are wont to receive that which is entirely outside of their experience and of popular opinions; treating the whole as hallucina-

tion, hinting that her mind was getting unhinged, and advising her to discard all such sickly fancies. The evidence of sense, fortified, no doubt, by her deceased husband's belief and experience, enabled her to hold to her convictions, despite the incredulity with which her statement was received. But, to avoid useless controversy, she ceased to communicate what she was in the habit of seeing; treasuring the matter, however, in her heart.

After some months had passed, Mrs. Barclay's brother begged her to take charge of his motherless children. To this she assented; and they continued in her family several years, much to their satisfaction. So long as the children remained with her the mother never showed herself.

At last the brother, who was a Catholic, became uneasy on the score of religion, his sister and he differing on that point. In the year 1866 he removed his children to a distant city.

From that time forth, as he afterwards confessed to his sister, he found no peace or satisfaction. Everything seemed to go wrong with him. He could not sleep of nights, and a vague feeling of uneasiness and unrest constantly hung over him. An event, evidently unwelcome to him, appeared to have finally decided him in the course through which he might seek relief. The event in question came to Mrs. Barclay's knowledge in this wise:

After the removal of the children, the sister-in-law began to re-appear to Mrs. Barclay; on one occasion in connection with an incident which made a deep impression on her. A little girl, five years old, her cousin, had been invited to stay with her, and the child shared her bed. Late one evening, as they were going to rest, the figure passed, in the usual fashion, across the room. The child stared at it, and, turning to Mrs. Barclay, "Cousin Mary," she said, "what does that woman want?"

"What woman, my child?"

"You know. The woman that walked across the room. Why didn't you speak to her, cousin?"

Mrs. Barclay did what she could to pacify the child; but children cannot be made to disbelieve what they see; and the girl's mind dwelt on the woman and on Mrs. Barclay's treatment of her. The next morning, at the breakfast table, she brought the subject up. "Oh, cousin Mary did behave so badly last night. A woman came into the room, and she wouldn't speak to her, or take any notice of her."

She was asked what sort of woman, and her description tended to identify the appearance as that of the sister-in-law.

One would think such testimony in corroboration might have overcome the scepticism of Mrs. Barclay's friends. But it did not. "You told the child," they said to her, "what you thought you saw; you described the figure as it appeared to you, and the

girl imagines it." It need hardly be said that neither Mrs. Barclay, nor any one else had ever, either to the child or in her presence, alluded to the subject.

This incident the sister related to the brother, adding: "But I know it is useless talking to you about it. Nothing will ever persuade you that what I have so often seen is real."

"You are mistaken," he replied, "I do believe it."

"Indeed! What has changed your opinion?"

He hesitated, but at last he said, with apparent reluctance, "Sister, I have seen her myself."

Mrs. Barclay enquired when and how; but on these points he would give her no satisfaction, merely adding: "I've taken care that it shan't happen again. I take a crucifix to bed with me now: that will keep her away."

Whether his precaution continued to prove effectual, I am unable to say. Shortly after the above conversation, he returned to his sister, expressing the hope that for the sake of his peace of mind she would receive the children again: and to this, as before, she agreed.

All this was related to me by Mrs. Barclay herself, in the year 1867, a few days after the brother had set out to fetch the children. He called upon her before starting, and told her that, since the time he had resolved to go, and while he was making his preparations, he had, for the first time in many months, felt tranquil and satisfied.

I took notes, at the time Mrs. Barclay communicated this narrative to me, and submitted these to her, for correction.

Now with any regard to the ordinary rules of evidence, how can we deny either the reality, or the identity, of this apparition? The corroborative testimony of the artless child and the appearance to the disbelieving brother sufficiently attest that it was no figment of the imagination, nor any visual hallucination; for the best writers on the subject of mental aberrations admit, that, while collective *illusions* are frequent, there is no example of collective *hallucination*.* Where two or more persons see the same thing at the same time, there is, doubtless, some objective reality, which produces an image on the retina, and could be photographed.

The motive, too, seems apparent. Observe that the appearance presented itself to Mrs. Barclay, time after time, *before the*

* An *illusion* has a foundation in reality: we see or hear something which we mistake for something else. *Hallucination* has no objective reality. It is an example of false testimony, apparently given by the senses in a diseased state. But millions of impressions may be produced on the brain when imagination is the sole agent: then how infinite the probabilities *against* the contingency that, among these millions, any two persons should see just the same thing at the same time!

children were entrusted to her, and again after they were withdrawn from her care; and that the visits were discontinued during the time they were under her roof. We cannot ascribe this to chance. It clearly indicates a purpose;—a purpose consonant with the idea of maternal anxiety; a purpose persisted in until the object sought was attained.

Consider upon what theory we can assume that the mother, in her spirit home, thought no more of the children she had left behind; or, if she did think of them, sought not their good, as she was wont to do. Consider upon what reasonable theory we can venture to deny that, in such a case as this, she may have been enabled, so far as a disembodied spirit may, to carry out her longings. Consider upon what rational theory we dare refuse assent to the inference that she had agency in procuring for her children, against her husband's religious scruples, a home suited to their mental and moral wants. If we reject that inference, so plainly suggested, what theory, accordant with the facts, have we ready wherewith to supply its place?

Yet by many, unprepared with any other theory, the hypothesis of a genuine apparition will be unhesitatingly rejected. How great, sometimes, is the credulousness of incredulity!

Such phenomena as these, wherever they show themselves, should be observed and recorded with scrupulous care; and all men, whether Spiritualists or not, should be consenting to this. If they cannot themselves examine, they should, at least, be willing for others to do so. They should remember the words of an ancient doctor, learned in the law. His name was GAMALIEL. When the Jews had taken counsel to put to death Peter and John and other apostles, he gave them this advice:

“Refrain from these men. Let them alone. For if this counsel and this work be of men, it will come to naught; if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it.”

“IN MY FATHER'S HOUSE ARE MANY
MANSIONS.”

THESE words, my brothers, are still ours. They were spoken in that little room to the wide world, and through those sorrowful eleven to the great sad heart of humanity—to all the Father's children. I commend them to you this day. I commend them to you whenever you want something to look forward to,—whenever you are weary and troubled and doubtful—whenever the way is hard, and the fight is stern. Go *then* and shut out awhile the clamorous world, and read these blessed words—the

dearest and the tenderest that ever fell on the heavy heart. He knew full well how in the after-time we should look and long for the Father's house, and what fond thoughts we should cherish, and what dear hopes. And he does not check us in this—does not bid us guard against our heart's longing. On the contrary, he seems to say—I have nothing to guard you against. I leave you free to look for what you will, well knowing that somewhere, in some one of the many mansions of the Father, your longings will be met. If it were not so I would have told you.

And I think we have here a clue to the very heart of this great mystery of the spirit-world. For what questions have been asked here! The sainted John and the converted thief both die. What becomes of them? Is it possible that they should go to the same place? or are the distinctions of earth prolonged and provided for? I think all these questions and many such are answered here. There are mansions fitted in their infinite variety of condition for the infinite needs and differences of earth. Not that there is some *one* separate state, some intermediate place, where all go to await an appointed day. For that does not take away, it only shifts, the difficulty: and we are left in the same involvement then, about the separate state, as we were in with regard to the one general or universal heaven. Not a gigantic intermediate state then, but heavens, states, spheres, as diverse as our characters, and mansions as varied as our conditions, does the Saviour tell us of in these words.

And who can estimate the consolation of this! I find one very ignorant and very incapable, knowing just enough to lead him right and keep him true; yet withal loving God with all his heart. But he feels how wide a gulf there is between his own soul and the souls of the mighty men of old: and he would fain hope for some place in the coming world, where he may be taken awhile—some heavenly college, where the soul shall make the strides in the heavenly wisdom that here it longed in vain to make. Why should I not take his hand and say—"My brother, let not your heart be troubled, there are *many* mansions in the Great Father's home, and be you sure there is one for you, where you shall find all your soul can need. Believe me, God will guide you thither, and you shall be taught the heavenly wisdom, and tread the heavenly courts at last, with exceeding joy."

I go out again and find the fallen and the awakened, grieving in their hearts because they think they have shut themselves from God; and the sins of the soul are a burden, and time is dark, and eternity is a terror, and the heavens above them seem like brass to their agony of fear. O why should I not go to them and say—Let not your heart be troubled. Do but trust

in God and all will be well. See how Christ has called him our Father, and surely in His many mansions there is one where you may be received awhile,—a world where the sin-spot may be taken from the soul, and the torn heart be healed—where pure waters are to be found and all stains are washed away.

I go out again, and find one perplexed and dumb before the manifold mysteries and contradictions of life. To him everything is a tangled web—orderless and meaningless; and life itself appears but a dark disordered dream. For him there are no connecting links—no underlying meanings—no woof nor web of Providence, but only a vexatious tanglement, and a cruel chance. Why should I not go to him and tell him of worlds where all the problems of earth are solved; where the burden of the mystery is made clear, and where he shall read, as in some bright book, the story of his life, and see the hidden meaning, and mark the blessed harmony, and admire the wondrous mercy of it all, until the new song shall be founded on the old story,—once so sadly dark, but now, for ever, so brightly blest?

I go out once more, and I meet the lonely and the sorrowful; for—

The air is filled with farewells to the dying,
And mourning for the dead.

What should I do?—Robe myself in sable like a heathen, and shriek my misery to the world as though I had no hope? or shall I sit calmly down and talk of the many-mansioned home where the good God has given one place to be the safe keeper of the severed ties of earth, to guard them well till the dear old circle is once more, and now eternally, complete? For who shall say there is no such meeting place for parted loves, no heavenly rendezvous, no home for the reuniting of the severed ties of time,—purified, perfected?

Again I go forth, and a little child is lying on her tiny bed. And I almost hear the haste with which the quick heart beats its gentle life away; and she is talking of heaven in her simple way, and, with a voice one cannot choose but love, her talk is all of gentle angels who will be like elder sisters to her,—who will lead her over blessed fields where bright flowers grow, and quiet rivers run, and glorious trees hold out their broad green arms to cast a shade where they may sit and talk, and think of God. And why should there not be some such heaven for her?—a mansion in her Father's house where little children go—a world of little ones where angel-guards shall teach and watch them, and lead them day by day up to some other home—and where, in very deed, there walks the shepherd Christ, to take them in his arms as in the days of old? Why should not all this be so, I say?—nay! how else *can* it be, with this blessed word before

us, so clear, so full, so unconditional—"In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you?" As if he would say—"Hope on, and let your fondest expectancy be unrestrained. Do but trust in God, and love Him as a little child, with simple, earnest heart, and He will guide you to a home that will be for you the best."

And now, it remains for us only to gather what strength, or courage, or hope we may, from these things. The life of some of us is one long struggle to know—a weary scaling of heights we never reach, and a sounding of awful depths we never fathom;—one feverish, restless, anxious study of the works and ways of God. We may take heart at these words. *Here* we are hemmed in by inexorable barriers and impassable confines; here we are only groping in the thick darkness;—the wisest of us only a child lying awake thinking in the night. But it shall not *always* be so. We shall know all some day. Released from this body, who knows what sublime and untried forces of the soul will be then set free!—who knows what hidden glory will burst upon the opened vision!—what infinite wonders will then lie unclouded before the soul! *Here* we are indeed in one of the Father's many mansions; but one day there shall be flung open to us the wide *universe* of God, and the light of the Eternal shall flash after us, and the Spirit of the Lord shall be our guide, and there shall be no baffling veil thrown over the works of God, and every resource of help shall be opened, and the eye shall no more look, and the heart no more ache, in vain,—but the unwearied soul shall pass from world to world for ever, in its triumphant discovery of the mighty secrets of the universe of God.

My brothers, some of you are in earnest; and your hearts cry out for the living God, and you are almost "tired of trying to know." The world seems full of mystery to you, and your very life is an oppressive secret. You look before and after, but there is only "the *hiding* of His power." Behold here your fairest hope; and find here your dearest promise—the earnest of the light that is to be. There be thousands of worlds, which are yours because you are His,—fair mansions—where all things shall be made for ever clear and plain. *Now*, you see

The weariness, the fever, and the fret,
Where men sit and hear each other groan;—
Where palsy shakes its few, sad, last gray hairs;—
Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies;—
Where but to think is to be full of sorrows, and leaden-eyed despairs.

But it shall not always be so with us. In my Father's house are *many* mansions, where each one may begin his upper course,—a home suited to the condition and capacity of every soul.

Dream then no more, but *know* what you believe, and in what you confide: and, beyond all life's experiences, doubts, and mysteries, let this assurance beam upon you from behind the veil, that the God to whom your own hearts bear witness, the God beloved by all redeemed and holy souls, the God that Jesus knew, is the Father of us *all*, and that in His perfect wisdom, justice, truth, and love, He will prepare a place for us—yes! for every *one* of us—where our errors may be corrected and where our infirmities may be taken away, till we learn to seek, and serve, and love Him as our Father, Friend, and King.—*The Truthseeker*.

NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

LOCALITY OF THE SPIRIT-WORLD.

Mrs. De Morgan, writing on this subject in *Daybreak*, and commenting on a statement given in a spirit-communication that, "all creation is an externalisation of spirit, an embodiment of thought; and this externalisation is the first essential condition of 'creature existence,'" remarks:—

The law of externalisation here hinted at, is the foundation of that doctrine of Swedenborg known as the theory of correspondences. It affords us the only means of explaining the differences and discrepancies found among various mediums, each professing to be influenced by the same spirit. For, in considering the truthfulness of any communication, we have not only to remember that it *changes* in coming from the spiritual to the natural sphere, but that its individual character is modified by being transferred from one spirit to another, so that the *form it assumes* in coming through the medium's mind *corresponds*, not entirely with the surroundings of the influencing spirit, but with those of the medium, whose ideas, whether correct or otherwise, necessarily form a vehicle for the communication. This consideration will help us in dealing with the question in hand. A seer, Mr. A. J. Davis, has fixed the locality of the spirit-world (or a portion of it) in the Milky Way, and the great spiritual opening of this seer is supposed to render the statement trustworthy. Let us just call to mind the nature of the Milky Way. This immense nebulae which we can see on clear nights forming a circle around the sky, has been *resolved*, in astronomical language, by Sir William Herschel. That is to say, it has been found to consist of separate stars, many of which have been clearly made out and

seen in the telescope as separate bodies, unsurrounded by any misty appearance in the dark sky. The nebulous appearance of the whole is due to its enormous distance, which also has the effect of massing together bodies, which, for anything we know, may be as far from each other as our sun is from any of the fixed stars. And each spot of light in the Milky Way is in all probability a sun, round which are circling other bodies, as the eight planets and hundred asteroids revolve round the sun of our universe. Our own solar system is part of the collection of bodies forming the Milky Way: it is only the distance between us and our neighbouring stars which makes the position to which we belong appear less densely massed together.

The assertion that the spirit-sphere is in the Milky Way, must mean, if it has any meaning at all, that the spiritual worlds pervade all creation and are extended through all universes. This form was perhaps the only one in which a truth broadly expressed could be given to an uncultivated brain. Such truths are valuable when we know how to read them, but when taken as actual descriptions of fact, they mislead those who receive them and excite the ridicule of those who perceive their literal absurdity, and who do not trouble themselves to find out whether they mean anything at all. The subject of mediumship with its powers and limitations is very obscure at present. A better understanding of it would harmonise some of those great discrepancies and contradictions which stand in the way of a true spiritual philosophy.

MRS. HARDINGE'S HISTORY OF AMERICAN SPIRITUALISM.

We have received this volume too late to notice it fully this month. We have, however, seen enough of it to ascertain that it forms a complete record and dictionary of Spiritualism in America, and to all present and future inquirers, it will be found essential in giving the history of the great movement in that country. We cordially commend it to our readers.

WILL POWER.

An interesting fact in mesmerism was stated one evening to the Dialectical Society by Mr. J. S. Bergheim, a member of its committee, and a powerful mesmerist. He said that one night he sat among the public at a lecture on mesmerism, and, without saying anything to anybody, willed strongly and constantly that the lecturer should have no power over the individuals he tried

to influence. Failure upon failure was the result of all the lecturer's exertions, and while much perplexed at this, he caught sight of Mr. Bergheim, whom he knew, and guessed the interference at work. He accordingly came to Mr. Bergheim, and told him if he could not sit there without interrupting the lecture, he had better walk out. With the same will power some unintelligent, strong-minded persons are able to stop weak physical manifestations at spirit-circles, and when they chance to mentally or vocally utter a religious formula at the same time, have been known to ascribe the resulting stoppage to the efficacy of their theological adjuration.

A PRESENTIMENT.

An exchange relates the following singular instance of presentiment:—Recently, a lady of Troy, sitting in her room, was instantaneously oppressed with the conviction that her little son had fallen from the window in his sleeping apartment to the ground below. She repelled the thought as an impossibility. In a few minutes more it rushed upon her mind with such force that she could not resist it. She hurried up to the bedside of her son, and there to her intense horror, she discovered the lad sleeping upon the window sill, the window open, his head projecting outside—he was on the very point of falling to the pavement below. Who can explain the phenomena, which is unquestionably true?

THE GLASGOW DAILY HERALD, ON SPIRITUALISM IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

The *Glasgow Daily Herald*, of November 27th last, has an article on Spiritualism, from which we take the following opening remarks:—

Spiritualism in the 19th century is either a great fact or a gigantic delusion, or both. That faith in spiritual manifestations is, at all events, a fact, there can be no doubt whatever, unless we are prepared to set down millions of men and women as deep designing knaves, and wilful impostors. It would be unreasonable, as well as unjust, to adopt such an alternative. The charge of knavery and imposture would be too sweeping in any view of the case, and, besides the character of not a few of the firmest devotees is far above such a suspicion. When we find the names of such men as Professor de Morgan, Robert Chambers, William Howitt, Judge Edmonds, C. F. Varley, and S. C. Hall, on the roll of believers, we must discard once for all the theory of universal imposition. On the other hand, it seems nearly as hard to believe that such men are simpletons or fools—the innocent dupes of vulgar "mediums," and the supporters of a doctrine or creed at variance with the laws of nature, human experience, and common sense. How are we to deal with such phenomena? The faith cannot be laughed down; exposure has also failed; and persecution in these days is out of the question. Spiritualism, in short, is a fact. . . .

The Spiritualists in the United States have been variously estimated within the last two years at from three to thirteen millions. They are to be found in greater numbers than some people are willing to believe in this country, on the Continent, in India, and at the Antipodes, and they are increasing instead of diminishing every year. They have magazines, newspapers, lecturers, and mediums by the hundred; and they have lately commenced to defend their faith at the meetings of learned societies. A movement such as this in an age which has been called materialistic and sceptical may well be considered remarkable, even by its most resolute opponents. It is too important, in fact, to be ignored altogether by the public, and too energetic and persevering to remain in obscurity. Not a few of its leading lights have published their experiences and their testimony, and challenge investigation and defy contradiction.

FARADAY'S DEFINITION OF A PHILOSOPHER.

In the *Life and Letters of Faraday*, by Dr. Bence Jones, secretary of the Royal Institution, and recently reviewed in the *Times*, we find the following excellent definition:—

“The philosopher should be a man willing to listen to every suggestion, but determined to judge for himself. He should not be biassed by appearances, have no favourite hypothesis, be of no school, and in doctrine have no master. He should not be a respecter of persons, but of things. Truth should be his primary object. If to these qualities he added industry, he may indeed hope to walk within the veil of the temple of nature.”—Vol. i., p. 220.

We have nothing to object or to add to this, except to say that we entirely agree in all that is required to make a true philosopher, and that much as we respect the virtuous character of Faraday, and highly as we estimate his wonderful contributions to science, it is yet a pity that he could not, in all matters and in all corners of his mind, follow out his own advice to others. That he could not do so, only shews perhaps that he was human, and therefore that the necessity was within him to draw the line somewhere, beyond which his mind and his belief would not expand, or enable him to work out his own definition of a true philosopher. Unfortunately for him, he “drew the line at bakers,” and got into much trouble in consequence, and he was so exposed in public, that he became petulant and obstinate on the subject of Spiritualism. It has now become a loving duty of his friends and associates, Professor Tyndall and Dr. Bence Jones, to help his memory out of the tight place in which he left it, by themselves taking up his position and doing battle for it. There is a nobility in this, though it is not wise nor true; but why should the stupid critic of the *Times* adopt their views, and mislead his readers by telling what is not true of Faraday's exploding machine? The critic says, “Table-turning and spirit-rapping he held in supreme contempt, and contrived a simple and effective apparatus for exploding the absurdity of the former. With reference to the latter, Faraday said:—

“‘What a weak, credulous, incredulous, unbelieving, superstitious, bold, frightened—what a ridiculous world ours is, as far as concerns the mind of man! How full of inconsistencies, contradictions, and absurdities! I declare that taking the average of many minds that have recently come before me (and apart from that spirit which God has placed in each), and accepting for a moment that average as a standard, I should far prefer the obedience, affection, and instinct of a dog before it. . . . I think the system of education that would leave the mental condition of the public body in a state in which this subject has found it must have been deficient in some very important principle.’”

We have had enough of this on former occasions, and do not wish to do more than place the two paragraphs in juxtaposition, to shew how a good and great man is unequal in his mind, and what absurdities and falsehoods he can believe in the interests of science, and against his own recorded principles of action.

MR. HOME AT DARLINGTON.—AN EVENING WITH THE
“SPIRITS.”

Mr. Nicholas Morgan writes to the editor of the *Sunderland Times* as follows:—“I attended a private *séance* on the evening of the 2nd instant, at Darlington, with Mr. D. D. Home, the Spiritualist, and although the phenomena educed were not very extraordinary, they were sufficiently uncommon to the ordinary affairs of life to arrest attention, and to call for investigation into their cause. Mr. Home's visit to Darlington was for the purpose of giving readings in the Centre Hall, on Tuesday night, the 4th. Spiritualism did not form any part of his programme, but for the accommodation of a few inquirers, he held a private *séance* at the house of his host, Mr. J. Hodge. At 8.30 p.m., a circle of nine—three ladies and six gentlemen, including Mr. Home—sat round a loo table, and placed their hands gently upon it, in the full blaze of a winter's fire, and the light from a three-burner chandelier. One of the gentlemen is the editor of a local paper, and another is an occasional contributor. In seven minutes phenomena were produced, which continued to be manifested at intervals for the space of one hour and a quarter, after which affairs came to a dead lock. The phenomena consisted chiefly of a variety of raps struck on the under surface of the table, under the flooring deals, and on the wall of the room; differing greatly in character and tone. Some were sharp, like as to the finger nail struck on the table, some had a hollow and muffled sound, some as though caused by the rap of a knuckle, and others appeared to proceed from a blow of the whole knuckles of a hand; and those which were struck on the under surface of the floor were like a blow from a wooden hammer. The motive power obliged us by rapping in any of the preceding methods

we desired, after they had been once produced. It also made the table to feel heavy or light in obedience to our wish. The raps were not confined to one spot on the table, but were struck on almost every part of its under surface, and, on one occasion, they crossed and re-crossed for a distance of three feet, and played a sort of military tattoo, the rolling of which was beautiful. This continued for a considerable length of time, during which the editor, at the suggestion of Mr. Home, went under the table to ascertain the cause, but though the tattooing continued the performer could not be discovered. The editor was often requested by Mr. Home to go under the table when any unusual phenomena were being produced. A gentleman had one of his knees pressed heavily, as though with the palm of a hand, but he could not say it was a hand. The pressure was heavy, the touch distinct, but peculiarly soft and delicate. I afterwards walked home with this gentleman, and he remarked that, if he had been a believer in Spiritualism, he would have thought that the spirit of a brother, who died in the Crimea during the war, had been present. Once the skirt of a lady's gown was tugged down, the effect of which could be seen by the sitters. Twice a sound was heard in the air by all present, which to some resembled the tinkling of a small bell, but appeared to me more like the effect of soft blows on the triangle. Mr. Home produced a very favourable impression upon all present by his gentlemanly demeanour, affability, and ingenuousness."—*York Herald*, 15th January.

MORAL RESPONSIBILITY.

"Société de Paris, 9th July, 1867.

"(Medium—M. Nivard.)

"I am present at all your mental discussions but without directing them: your thoughts are emitted in my presence, but I do not suggest them. It is the foreshadowing of the event that is most likely to present itself which stimulates in you the thoughts necessary to resolve the difficulties which arise. This is free-will; it is the action of the incarnate spirit struggling to solve the problems which are by itself proposed.

"In fact, if men had the ideas only that the spirits inspire them with they would have little responsibility and little merit; they would have simply the responsibility of having attended to bad counsels or the merit of having followed good ones. Such responsibility and such merit must be evidently much inferior to that which results from the action of entire free-will. In other words, acts done through the plenary exercise of the faculties of

the spirit would, under such circumstances, operate without solicitation. Hence, as I have said, men have often thoughts proper to man; and the calculations they make, the reasons they entertain, and the conclusions at which they arrive, are as completely the result of the exercise of their intelligence as is manual labour the result of corporeal action. It must not, however, be inferred that no assistance is afforded in developing the thoughts and facilitating the acts of man by the spirits who surround him; on the contrary, spirits, whether good or evil, are often the exciting cause of his acts and thoughts; but he is entirely ignorant under what circumstances this influence operates: so much so, that his actions are believed to emanate from himself; his free-will remains intact; there is no difference between the acts accomplished without persuasion and those done under spirit influence, either in the degree of merit or responsibility. In both cases, the responsibility and the merit exist, but, I repeat, not in the same degree. This principle requires, I believe, no demonstration; it will be sufficient if I offer an illustration.

“If a man commits a crime, to which he had been led by the dangerous counsels of another who exercised a powerful influence over him, human justice would recognize the fact, and would allow him the benefit of extenuating circumstances; it goes farther, it punishes the man whose pernicious counsels had been the exciting cause, and without having in any other manner contributed to the result, such man would be more severely punished than he who had been only the instrument, because it was he who had conceived the crime, and it was his influence acting upon a weaker being which had caused the act to be accomplished. Well then, if *man* in such a case diminishes the responsibility of the criminal by dividing it with the miscreant who had suggested the crime, will you not believe that GOD, who is Justice itself, will not do as much where your reason tells you that so to act would be only just?

“As regards the merit of good actions, it is, as I have said so much the less if man has been solicited to do such actions. The argument is the counterpart of that relating to responsibility and can be demonstrated by reversing the proposition.

“Hence, when the mind is led from one subject to another; when it discusses the facts which it foresees or which have actually occurred; when it analyses, reasons, and when it judges, do not believe that it is spirits who dictate or direct the thoughts: they are present with you; they hear; they contemplate with pleasure the intellectual exercise which occupies you, and their pleasure is doubled when they see that your conclusions are in conformity with the dictates of truth.

"It sometimes occurs that the spirits *do* take part in those intellectual actions, whether to facilitate their movements, to afford to the spirit certain aliments, or to suggest certain difficulties, in order that the results may be rendered more profitable when applied to practice; but generally the inquirer is left to work out his own reflections, under the vigilant eye of his guardian spirit, who interposes only where the case is sufficiently serious to make interference necessary."—*Translation from "Revue Spirite," by R. B.*

THE EDITOR OF THE "REVUE SPIRITUALISTE" AND THE
ASSEMBLY OF FREE-THINKERS AT NAPLES.

M. Piérart, always the stout and steady advocate of Christian Spiritualism, has addressed a very eloquent letter to M. Ricciardi, the projector and organizer of the Assembly of Free Thinkers, who proposed to meet at Naples during the sitting of the Œcumenical Council at Rome. M. Piérart tells him that he rejoiced at the idea of an assembly of intelligent and independent men meeting to expose the errors and pestilent dogmatism of Popery, at the very time that the grand powers of the Papacy were in session, for the purpose of still further riveting the chains of ignorance and priestcraft on mankind. That he should have rejoiced to appear in such an assembly, and to assist in exposing the pagan origin of Mariolatry, the superstition of Eucharistolatry, with all the mischievous dogmas of the immaculate conception, infallible popes, clerical celibacy, and auricular confession—the two last the institutions which of all others disturb society, and demand most urgently a speedy abolition. But to his consternation he beheld in their programme that all theological discussions were to be prohibited in this free-thinking assembly, and the great questions of God, a future life, and final causes to be proscribed. In fact, he discovered that a majority of this assembly were to be Atheists and Materialists, and he at once perceived that such an assembly, so far from counter-acting the progress of Popery, will only give it new strength. He asserts then an assembly of liberal men who should meet for the purpose of restoring Christianity to its primitive purity and simplicity—a work which no papal council will ever undertake—would be hailed by a vast multitude of enlightened people in every part of Europe, and would seize on the sympathies of the masses; that he himself in such an assembly would have explained himself historically and rationally on Christ and the nature of His work. He would have demanded of the Papacy what it had made of the noble heritage of this great Consoler,

this Enfranchiser of the disinherited classes; and as it is not enough to destroy, but is also necessary to build up, he would have demanded, not merely a faith in God and a future life—truths admitted by nearly all mankind—but a return to primitive Christianity placed in accordance with the light of science; that is to say, Christianity as Jesus himself would teach it, were He to come amongst us now. The true primitive Christianity, the result of a free religious exegesis, teaches none of the dogmas of the Papacy which he had enumerated.

From such an assembly M. Piérart declares that a vast and happy result must have issued to the world; but he warns them from history, and especially the history of the French Revolution, what will be the inevitable consequences of the dogmas of Atheism and Materialism. He most truly describes the advocates of such principles as history has ever shown them. They are selfish, vain, and incapable of long union. To the abuses of egotism and *insolidarité*, such even are only too ready to oppose their implacable and levelling passions. Love is absent from their hearts, because the sentiment of religion does not reign there. They will devour one another on the morrow of a victory, and will cause their children to experience all the miseries of the social hell. "Such were the men of '93 in the midst of the madness and excesses which, by the side of heroic actions, sullied that memorable epoch. They had not a particle of religious sentiment. Epicureans and Atheists, given up to the furious passions of pride and envy; they even quarrelled in the hour of victory instead of loving each other and making mutual concessions. They sent each other to the scaffold, and those who survived became quickly the rotten and horribly corrupt members of the Directory, the renegades of the Empire, the Fouchés, the Talleyrands, and the rest, who made themselves the tools of tyrants and of the Papacy which again, though more slowly, revived. Such, in truth, is the future which again assuredly awaits us, for without the religious sentiment, in political conflicts, as in other trials of life, are generated only evil passions, subversive instincts, the outburst of every species of arrogance, the thirst of exclusive domination on the one part, and on the other, personal interest and covetousness disguising themselves under the show of civic devotion, and making a loud demand of rights without any regard to the performance of duties; in a word, anarchy, dissolution, ruin and weakness; then sombre tragedies, massacre, the scaffold in permanence; then lassitude, disgust, treason, abjurations, grand deceptions, and, end of all, a return to servitude. This is what everything prognosticates to us, and which we shall soon see realized. Humanity, whether hypocritical, religious or indifferent, or openly

atheistical and Voltairian, has but too clearly to pass once more through the ordeal of these sad experiences. Let it be so, then, since it must; happy if, in the end, it re-enters into itself, seeking after that health which is indispensable to it, and which it will never find till it takes refuge in the religious sentiment."—*Revue Spiritualiste*, June 12, 7^e liv.

If we reason from the past to the present, we must concede to the views of M. Piérart, great weight. That mind must be singularly unreflective and untaught of history, which does not entertain the conviction that the immense predominance of materialistic infidelity in the present age, and the gross and wide-spread sensualism which has followed in its train, are preparing their own scourge at no distant period.

Notices of Books.

SPIRIT COMMUNICATIONS.*

BOOKS of the kind indicated by the above title rarely have that interest for the general reader which they have for the persons to whom they are more particularly addressed. Spirit communications in general derive their chief interest from the special circumstances under which they are written, and their adaptation to those for whom they are primarily given. This very fitness to times and persons however renders them more fit for the private ear than for the public at large; and even when, as with the present volume, the themes are of general rather than private interest, they are apt to be comparatively flat and flavourless when detached from all connection with the affections, convictions and mental habitudes with which they were in more immediate sympathy. The communications in this work consist of short familiar essays on such subjects as "Spirit Life," "Evidence of Immortality," "Salvation," "Essay on Man," and kindred topics of equal magnitude, and the treatment of which seems to us very trite, and scarcely commensurate to their importance. We must not however forget that men are so variously constituted, and so differ in character and intellectual development,

* Instructive Communications from Spirit Life. Written through the Mediumship of Mrs. S. E. PARK, by the instrumentality of her Spirit Husband, who departed this life in 1863. Boston: WHITE and COMPANY.

that what to one class of minds may seem to have but little force and value, to another may be full of instruction and suggestion. It is in this hope that the present work appears to have been issued, and we dare say it will not altogether fail in its effect.

From the Appendix we quote the following passage by the medium, descriptive of the method by which the communications were given:—

I am seated at my table, writing. No thought is bestowed upon the subject, and indeed it is not given until each piece is finished. After one word is written, no thought is taken as to what the next shall be; and the same fact applies to sentences: when one is finished, what follows remains in obscurity. As the subjects change, the same condition of indifference continues; so that, as each piece is finished, it is a production so foreign to myself as to need a thorough perusal to be understood. These sentiments drop into the mind, one by one, without any effort of my own, forming ideas entirely unknown, which I am not able to distinguish, neither to form any idea of the character of the piece written.

As a general rule, the less the interest manifested by myself, with more ease and readiness do the impressions flow. Coming from a source foreign to myself, it becomes necessary that I should maintain a passive state of mind, willing to receive what is given; and thus am I the instrument by which the sentiments contained in this book have been given to you.

SEERS OF THE AGES.*

THIS is an elegant volume, of nearly 400 pages, in which the Seers of the Ages pass before us in quick succession; and Spiritualism, both ancient and modern, is brought under review. Its contents admit of being classified under three general divisions. The first embracing Spiritualism in the great nations of antiquity—India, Egypt, China, Persia, Palestine, Greece, and Rome; the second, Christian and Mediæval Spiritualism; and the third, Modern Spiritualism, phenomenal and exegetical.

We cannot altogether commend the spirit in which the work is conceived and executed. Its style is rhetorical and ornate, running into what Americans call "hifalutin." A little of this goes a long way, and should be very sparingly used; we soon tire of glare and tropical luxuriance, and welcome the friendly shade and the homely green grass. Where instruction is aimed at, especially in narrative, the style should be simple, natural, and easy; and many readers of this volume would gladly have

* *Seers of the Ages: embracing Spiritualism, Past and Present; Doctrines stated, and Moral Tendencies defined.* By J. M. PEEBLES. Boston: WHITE and COMPANY.

dispensed with a good deal of its eloquence and fine writing for ampler information on matters of which little is popularly known.

A more capital defect is in the matter of the work. Its author seems at deadly feud with all the creeds and churches of Christendom; and wherever practicable, he takes occasion to disparage Christianity, both directly by depreciation, and indirectly by lauding every other faith and philosophy in comparison with it. His motto seems to be:—"Every mountain of Christian faith shall be laid low, and every valley of Paganism shall be exalted; and its crooked places shall be made straight, and its rough places plain." This, however, is not history, it is not philosophy, it is special pleading; though it may be unconsciously so, and is a serious disqualification for such a task as Mr. Peebles has undertaken. It warps his judgment, colours his statements, and is a disturbing element in his estimates of the relative merits of the *Seers of the Ages*, and of their teachings; and so justly impairs the confidence of the reader in him as a trustworthy expositor and a reliable guide.

Mr. Peebles sees clearly enough this fault in others. He complains that Christians dare not be honest in dealing with other faiths. Well, we share his indignation against all dishonest advocacy of any cause, against all disingenuous representations for whatever purpose, by whomsoever made. It is mean and pitiful, and must be reprobated by all good, honest, truth-loving men: it shews how completely sectarian narrowness may blind the moral sense. Such instances should have operated on Mr. Peebles as a warning to deter him from their bad example. Bad, indeed! but is it any better when the same spirit is manifested in the exactly opposite direction? Is it wrong in Christian advocates, and right only when exercised for anti-Christian purposes?

We make these strictures in no sectarian or censorious spirit; but in the interest of truth, and from a sense of duty. We gladly recognize the many substantial merits of Mr. Peebles's work: it contains excellent material, which we can only regret has not been cast in a better mould. It shews varied and extensive reading; it contains some choice extracts from scarce and valuable writings, a fund of historical and biographical anecdote illustrative of Spiritualism, and an imposing array of testimony in its favour from divines, authors, social and political reformers, and other persons of ability, eminence, and high public position. Its usefulness as a work of reference is enhanced by a copious index; and a list is appended of the principal authors and books consulted in its preparation.